

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. Claims 1 and 18 have been amended to clarify that pre-charging is performed and that the beam of charged particles is directed towards side walls, but not bottoms, of the contact openings. Support for these amendments may be found in the specification as filed, for example at paragraph 69. A typographical error in claim 18 has been corrected. No new matter is added.

The present claims are patentable over Yamada et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,768,324. For example Yamada fails to describe a system in which a beam of charged particles is directed towards side walls, but not bottoms, of contact openings. At best, Yamada indicates that the beam is directed to impact side walls and bottoms of contact openings (see Fig. 54), but provides no discussion of the benefit of irradiating only side walls thereof. Hence, the present claims are patentable over Yamada.

If any additional fee associated with this communication is required, please charge Deposit Account No. 19-3140.

Respectfully submitted,

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